

Contacts:

Barbara Golden, 904.209-4425
Bgolden@FloridasHistoricCoast.com
Kathy Catron, 904-209-4424
KCatron@FloridasHistoricCoast.com



**ST. AUGUSTINE
PONTE VEDRA**
FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST®

African-American History and Heritage on Florida's Historic Coast

A Place of History & Heritage for Many Peoples

St. Augustine, Fla. - When you walk along the beaches in Ponte Vedra or stroll along the bay front in St. Augustine, your steps follow a trail to freedom forged by many different cultures. St. Augustine began in 1565 as a Spanish settlement where these Europeans lived alongside the Timucuan Indians – people indigenous to the region.

The story of St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra also includes periods when it was occupied by the British and hosted the first immigration of Greek and Minorcans to what became America. Africans also had their place alongside the Spanish in the struggle to protect their land from the British. All brought their own culture, which became the greater living history of St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra and still influences the region today.

This year, on the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Civil Rights Act, Florida's Historic Coast recognizes its place in the lead up to this important American milestone and its heritage as the first free African settlement in what is today the United States.

Freedom's First

Sit quietly in the natural preserve that is Fort Mose state park where people from different countries came together as equals in a shared cause – freedom in a land of their own. In 1738, slaves fleeing from the British were granted their freedom by the Spanish who occupied St. Augustine. In exchange for converting to Catholicism and pledging to join the Spanish in defending the territory from their enemies, these former slaves found a home of their own. That settlement was Fort Mose, where free men and their families formed a militia and the northern defense post for the nation's oldest city.

Actually, freedom in St. Augustine goes back even further for African-Americans. Africans were among the explorers and soldiers who first discovered Florida, sailing with Ponce de Leon and Pedro Menendez – not as slaves, but as soldiers in the service of Spain.

Fort Mose has also been recognized as one of the original sites on the southern route of the Underground Railroad. In 1994 the site was designated as a National Historic Landmark and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The grounds include a sundrenched boardwalk with interpretive signage that details the life and heritage of these first free Black Americans. The park's museum features exhibits and historic reenactments are scheduled throughout the year.

Fort Mose is located at 15 Fort Mose Trail, less than 5 minutes from the historical attractions, restaurants and shopping of the nation's oldest city, St. Augustine.

The Civil Rights Movement and St. Augustine

St. Augustine played a pivotal role in the nation's Civil Rights movement. On June 9, 1964, Civil Rights movement leader Martin Luther King was arrested in St. Augustine during a protest for human rights. Alongside King was Andrew Young. Young led a night march from Lincolnville to the Constitution Plaza where he was met with violent opposition. Young and his group of demonstrators were beaten by a white mob of 300 armed men who had waited for the marchers to arrive. The activists, being true to Dr. King's non-violent strategy, walked away injured, many taken to area hospitals.

Other significant events in this volatile time in history include protest of the St. Augustine Four, who caught the attention of the country with the simple act of sitting at the Woolworth's counter.

In St. Augustine, people were caught up in something bigger than themselves. Politics, protest, progress – it all happened here.

Find out more about the oldest city's contentions and contributions to civil liberties in America

St. Augustine Civil Rights Museum

In 2013, Flagler College launched the Civil Rights Library (www.CivilRightsLibrary.com), an extensive online archive that was the culmination of years of research and collaboration between faculty, students, historians and people who lived and visited St. Augustine during the tumultuous times of the civil rights movement. The student-led project features never before seen items including FBI files detailing Martin Luther King Jr.'s time in St. Augustine, as well as the surveillance the city was under both before and after MLK arrived. Other items include details on the arrest of the St. Augustine Four, audio of Jackie Robinson's visit, and civil rights archives from Young.

Accord Freedom Trail

The ACCORD Freedom Trail Project consists of 31 historic markers located at various sites significant to the St. Augustine Civil rights movement. A cell phone audio tour is available by calling 904.335.3002. Learn more at www.accordfreedomtrail.org.

St. Augustine Black Heritage Tours

St. Augustine Black Heritage Tours offer free Historic Walking Tours focusing on Black History and the Civil Rights Movement in St. Augustine. <http://staugustineblackheritagetours.com>

African Americans in Sports

Explore the **World Golf Hall of Fame & Museum "Honoring the Legacy"** exhibit that celebrates African- American's in Golf. This exhibition contains rare photographs, audio, video and memorabilia to highlight the long, rich history of African-Americans in golf starting with pioneers from the late 1800s through today's game. The centerpiece of the exhibition is an original sculpture designed by the renowned sculptor Mario Chiodo and celebrates 13 African-American golf legends and represents an historic timeline of African-Americans in golf. For more about this special exhibit that is by far on of the Hall of Fame's most advanced exhibits visit www.WorldGolfHallofFame.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS CELEBRATING AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY, HERITAGE AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Last Saturdays - Living History Days at Fort Mose

From 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., volunteers in period clothing offer visitors a fascinating glimpse into the past at the site of the first, legally-sanctioned, free black community in the United States. Admission is \$4 per vehicle or \$2 for pedestrians or bicyclists. 15 Fort Mose Tr., St. Augustine. 904-823-2232 www.floridastateparks.org/fortmose

February - Flight to Freedom at Fort Mose

Every 15 minutes from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., visitors will be taken on a guided walk along the freedom trail to experience what it was like for the hundreds of slaves who traveled to Fort Mose in search of freedom from the British. 15 Fort Mose Trail, St. Augustine. 904-823-2232 www.floridastateparks.org/fortmose

March - Founding of Fort Mose

The founding of Fort Mose on March 15, 1738 is the central them of programs presented from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., noted experts from the University of Florida or University of South Florida will present enlightening discussions of the role of slavery in the struggle between Spain and Britain for control of the southeastern United States. Admission is \$4 per vehicle or \$2 for pedestrians or bicyclists. 15 Fort Mose Trail, St. Augustine. 904-823-2232 www.floridastateparks.org/park/Fort-Mose

May - The Waning Days of the Fort Mose

Visitors to St. Augustine's Fort Mose State Park experience life at the fort during the final days of its existence. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., programs will focus on the lives of former British slaves who found freedom at the Spanish fort. At 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., history professor Dr. Jane Landers presents "Atlantic Transformations: the Many Lives of Francisco Menendez and His Free Black 'Subjects'." Admission is \$4 per vehicle or \$2 for pedestrians or bicyclists. 15 Fort Mose Trail, St. Augustine. 904-823-2232 <https://www.floridastateparks.org/park/Fort-Mose>

June - Battle of Bloody Mose

This 6th annual re-enactment of the June 26, 1740 Battle of Bloody Mose provides visitors with an exciting look at this pivotal battle between the British under the command of Georgia's James Oglethorpe and the Spanish militia composed of former British slaves who had been granted their freedom by the Spanish. On Saturday, the program is from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with battle re-enactments at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. At noon, Florida's Living History with a Mission will present scenes from one of Spain's oldest plays, Nuevo Mundo, by Lope de Vega. On Sunday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., visitors can meet re-enactors portraying the various Spanish, British, African and Native American groups present during the battle. The event is weather permitting. Admission is \$4 per vehicle or \$2 for pedestrians or bicyclists. 15 Fort Mose Trail, St. Augustine. 904-823-2232 www.floridastateparks.org/park/Fort-Mose

September - Fort Mose: Colonial Children Story Time and Crafts

From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., children visiting Fort Mose State Park will learn about what life was like for African children living at Fort Mose in 1738. Storytellers will share the adventures of children whose families found freedom by fleeing to Spanish Florida from British colonies to the north. Children will also have an opportunity to make their own Spanish colonial crafts, learn about flint lock muskets and drill with the Spanish soldiers who defended Fort Mose. Admission to Fort Mose State Park is \$4 per vehicle or \$2 for pedestrians or bicyclists. 15 Fort Mose Trail St. Augustine. 904-823-2232 www.floridastateparks.org/park/Fort-Mose

Located midway between Daytona Beach and Jacksonville, Florida's Historic Coast includes historic St. Augustine, the outstanding golf and seaside elegance of Ponte Vedra, 42 miles of pristine, Atlantic beaches and the location of Ponce De Leon's historic discovery of Florida in 1513. For more information on events, activities, holiday getaway and vacation opportunities in St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches, go to the Visitors and Convention Bureau website at www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com, become a fan on Facebook or call 1.800.653.2489.

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